



News Release

For immediate release: March 5, 2013

(13-026)

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Washington health department among the first to earn national accreditation

Public health accreditation recognizes high performance, effectiveness, and accountability

OLYMPIA — The Washington State Department of Health is one of the first two state health agencies in the country to earn accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board. The national board made the announcement this week. Accreditation means the department meets national standards for public health services and commitment to continuous improvement.

“Being among the first to be nationally accredited is a significant accomplishment for our state and the Department of Health,” said Governor Jay Inslee. “Every day public health agencies impact the lives of people in Washington by tracking and monitoring diseases, making sure water is safe to drink, and food is safe to eat. The national recognition shows we’re focusing our resources on the right areas, and people will be healthier as a result.”

To be accredited, the state Department of Health went through a rigorous assessment to show it meets or exceeds a set of standards and measures. Since the national accreditation program began in September 2011, nearly 130 local, regional, and state health agencies have applied for accreditation; Washington and Oklahoma are the first states to be approved, and the Spokane Regional Health District is among the first local health departments to be accredited.

“A person’s health affects their life every day, from the moment they get up until they go to bed at night,” said Secretary of Health Mary Selecky. “In public health we strive to give people the information and opportunities to make healthy decisions. Accreditation shows we have effective programs and measures in place to meet the needs of our communities and help people be as healthy as possible. I’m proud of this accomplishment and Washington residents should be, too.”

Accreditation measures capacity to protect food and water, prepare and respond to health threats, promote healthy behaviors, and prevent diseases and injuries. These public health protections are

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the basis of healthy people and healthy communities. The accreditation program is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

“Congratulations to the health departments that have achieved this extraordinary accomplishment,” said CDC Director Dr. Tom Frieden in a news release. “Just as schools, hospitals, and law enforcement agencies do, health departments can use the accreditation process to improve services and better protect health. We look forward to the day when most people in this country are served by accredited health departments.”

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